

**BUTTE COUNTY
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION
Friday, March 15, 2002
Minutes**

Held at the Gridley City Council Chambers, the meeting called to order at 8:39 a.m. Vice-Chair Patricia Cragar chaired in the absence of Gene Smith.

Commissioners present: Patricia Cragar, Marian Gage, Mark Lundberg, and Linda Moore.
Commissioners absent: Jane Dolan, Gary House, Sandra Machida, and Chair Gene Smith.
Staff present: Cheryl Giscombe, Gina Ellena, and Eva Puciata.

A moment of silence was observed for Deborah Rowell (deceased March 5, 2002).

Item 1: Agenda Review

The Annual Evaluation of the Program Manager was postponed to April, due to lack of time.

Item 2: Approval of Minutes. Approval of 2-15-02 *DRAFT* meeting minutes.

No quorum was present, so the February 15, 2002 minutes could not be approved.

Item 3: Mini-Grant Presentations

Freley Hosannah presented for the Butte County Library Literacy Program. The goal was to serve 200 children ages 0-5, but have served over 500 thus far. Containing 15 major outreach activities, literacy programs are active in Chico, Durham, the Maidu camp, Oroville, Palarmo, and Paradise and have recently expanded to the Spanish community. English is often not spoken in the home at all, and the demand for one-on-one bilingual services is tremendous. They have to turn away four requests a month; choose those with the most need. Clients have lots of needs besides literacy, and are connected to services by staff making phones call. The program will continue although goals have been exceeded.

Wendy Pierce spoke for Parent Education Network's Playtime Project. Playtime is a structured environment for children and parents. Currently services to 100 children are provided. There are five playgroups in Chico, and one in Oroville, but families come from throughout Butte County. (Suitable spaces are barriers in Paradise and Gridley.) The groups meet between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. (when children are at their best), once a week for 10 weeks. In the two-hour program, the first hour is spent with basic parenting skills, and teaching parents to play with their children. In the second hour, parents leave to meet with a group facilitator who helps them exchange parenting ideas. The toddlers are together to learn independent socialization skills. The program is popular and there is a long waiting list.

Sherry Bloker presented for the Public Health Prenatal Care Card program. The Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR), a community assessment, indicated that too many fetal deaths were occurring in Butte County. Upon review, it was seen that many women were not using services, due to various barriers, like no car, lack of knowledge of pregnancy symptoms and best care. The Prenatal Care Card gives women information they need, the outside is health info for the woman, and the inside contains medical information. Incentives are given to complete their card by visits to their care provider, although there has only been a

small response for in-kind incentives. Women's groups love the card, which is small enough to keep in a purse, but OB/Gyn's are often concerned about more paperwork. The State of CA is talking about using a similar kind of card. Four other counties have used the card successfully.

Marian Gage asked where are we in the process of mini-grants. Gina Ellena said we are winding down, but some will ask for an extension.

Item 4: Service Recognition for Departing Commissioner Deborah Rowell

Patricia said we were going to commend Deborah Rowell for her work on the Commission, before her untimely death on March 5, 2002. Deborah was deeply committed to her work, and started the SEA Center to advocate for special needs children. Deborah was only 43, and lived "It's only when we know we have a limited time on Earth, that we live each day to the fullest" (Elizabeth Kubler-Ross).

Patricia read and presented the resolution to Linda Ravencroft, Deborah's aunt.

The Resolution and trophy will again be presented at a SEA Center Board meeting.

Item 5: Administration Committee Report

Patricia reported the three responses to our ad for a new Commissioner were reviewed, and Karen Marlatt of Head Start will be recommended to the Board of Supervisors for appointment to the Commission. An emergency meeting will meet this upcoming Monday (as there will be a quorum), to facilitate approval of a new Commissioner.

The Budget Ordinance change will be on the April meeting agenda.

Mark Lundberg asked if he should serve on the Administration Committee; he is recommended to be on the Contract Awards Committee, so that the Administration Committee is not entirely composed of County agency members.

Gene Smith recommended the standing committees be the Administration and Contract Awards Committees. All others should be Ad Hoc. The Administration Committee concurs.

Item 6: Membership Terms

Mark Lundberg said we ought to think about whether we want term limits. On another commission he's on, they can only serve two consecutive terms.

Marian said term limits would allow other folks to serve. We have continuity with three members always on the Commission: the Public Health Director and the Employment, the Social Services Director, and the County Supervisor.

There was discussion whether the Ordinance establishing the Commission or the Bylaws speak to term limits. Marian asked whether an education person is indicated. The section of the Ordinance establishing terms was read (no term limits), and the section as to categories of people to be on the Commission was read (an education person is indicated).

Mark said it'd be good to have new blood, new ideas, and no one should serve more than three terms, and he'd be prepared to make a motion in the future.

Patricia recommended agendizing Term Limits for a vote, with copies of the ordinance.

Laurie Aumack of Home Health said a new Advisory Committee would provide new ideas without disrupting Commission continuity. School Readiness may need an Advisory Committee, per Marian.

Item 7: Advisory Committee Report – Children’s Services Coordinating Council

Cathy Grams, Chair of the CSCC, presented. She said the CSCC was brought together as a result of SB 997 said the Board of Supervisors appointed its members in 1994 (Patricia was on the council when it began in 1994.) The CSCC currently has about 45 active members representing about 30 agencies in Butte County. The mission is to provide and develop leadership to promote provision of comprehensive integrated services for children and families through interagency coordination. Four workgroups were developed in the last year and provide guidance to the CSCC: 1) Organizational Structure, 2) Resources, 3) Systems Integration, and 4) Data/Evaluation. Although there are gaps, lots of services are provided, so CSCC has educational forums/trainings, meeting twice monthly to educate each other on who does what.

With funding through BCOE Family Preservation and Healthy Start, a 1/3-time staff person, Julie Jarrett was hired.

Item 8: Children’s Services Coordinating Council Workgroup – Systems Development Proposal

Heather Senske, co-chair of the Data/Evaluation CSCC subcommittee, said she will introduce the “Information and Referral System Project,” and ask for funds (the set-aside Systems Integration funds) to match CalWORKS performance incentive funds already secured. They propose to create a web-based resource directory, to be used by info and referral agency staff. Plans for expansion of the project are being developed, to eventually link into the future 211 system.

The 211 phone system is several years away, maybe only a year away in large cities, said Bill Hubbard. First thing to do is put an online database together, and keep it updated, decide what the standards are for inclusion/exclusion from the database (ex: pro or anti-abortion). Next is public outreach showing where there is free access to computers and website. A management team will meet weekly for project oversight. PIC will be the fiscal intermediary. The database will first be info, then referral. Confidentiality issues have killed the effort many times, so phasing is necessary.

Mark said that people who need services don’t have computers. It was explained Social Services could help the poor to access the services. Gina developed the low-cost/no-cost flyer. The web-based system would replace it, but there still would be a need for a printed flyer, for people with no computer access.

Marian said an investment is asked for, but the budget is only for 15 months. It needs to be 5 years at least. Funding projections are needed for a bigger picture. Hubbard said it'd be a guess at best.

Heather indicated that time is of the essence. Patricia asked Cheryl to contact County Counsel regarding the Brown Act and adding another item to Monday’s Fiscal Training Agenda. (County Counsel said the Monday meeting was a “Special Meeting,” and Special Meeting agenda’s cannot be changed. The CSCC proposal will be agendaized in April.)

There was a ten-minute bio-break at 10:47 a.m.

Item 9: School Readiness Committee Report

Marian reported a series of focus groups have met (computer lab, school site and early childhood education facility visits). The last focus group to meet will be parents.

The SR proposal is coming together, and will be submitted to the Commission at the April meeting. Hopefully there will be a quorum, so that approval is possible and the May submission date is met. The SR Committee will ask the Commission for a match.

Lots of service integration issues are being looked at, with complex phasing approaches.

Transition teams are at each school site. Children of families most in need aren’t in childcare.

Cheryl commended Marian for sharing her expertise at the Mini-Grant function on March 14, 2002.

Patricia asked if the April meeting date should be changed to be sure of a quorum.

Item 10: California Children & Families Commission's Equity Principles – Commissioner Deborah Rowell

Cheryl shared the Equity Principles that Deborah conveyed before her death. The CA Commission has adopted the Principles, and considers them when awarding funds. Cheryl hopes our Commission will adopt the Principles. It will be an action item at the April meeting.

Item 11: Staff Report

Gina reported two-thirds of the mini-grant contract year is up and 39% of the funds have been expended. Four or five grants may need extensions, and asked if she should contact them. Commissioners entrusted Gina to make decisions regarding extensions. If there are still concerns, the Contract Awards Committee should be contacted.

Mark asked would legal implications ensue if extensions were not approved? Would the conflict go to the courts? Marian said our contracts have a 30-day out clause for both parties.

Most contractors are trying to do what they said they would per Gina. The Youth for Change Childcare Center has not started. They do not have a building permit. If necessary they will purchase the equipment and store it until a facility is available.

Mark asked Gina to prepare a written report on what mini-grant contract modifications occur.

Gina said she is very impressed with Home Health Care's high tech van, a complete "mobile resources center," with computer access, satellite access, etc.

Cheryl said the State is in contract negotiations with their evaluation, and we will take a look at their RFQ before we put together ours for our evaluation, using similar language. Marian said she hopes the RFQ draft can be approved at the April meeting.

Cheryl asked if a media notice regarding the large grants should go out now. Doreen Roberts had recommended waiting until after contracts were finalized.

Marian said better coverage than in Section C is needed. Why not do a media event during the Week of the Young Child in April? The grant winners could be invited to a press conference on April 19.

Cheryl spoke to the need to address CCAFA membership, and Marian asked it be agendaized for April.

Item 12: Public Input

Gloria Balch reminded everyone of the CA Childcare Resource & Referral Network's free luncheon on March 22 in Redding, and passed out a bookmark, "25 ways to love a child," which will be given to parents. In the near future Gloria would be happy to present information on the status of childcare in our County, recently released by the Referral Network.

The meeting adjourned at 11:41 a.m.

Minutes by Eva Puciata.